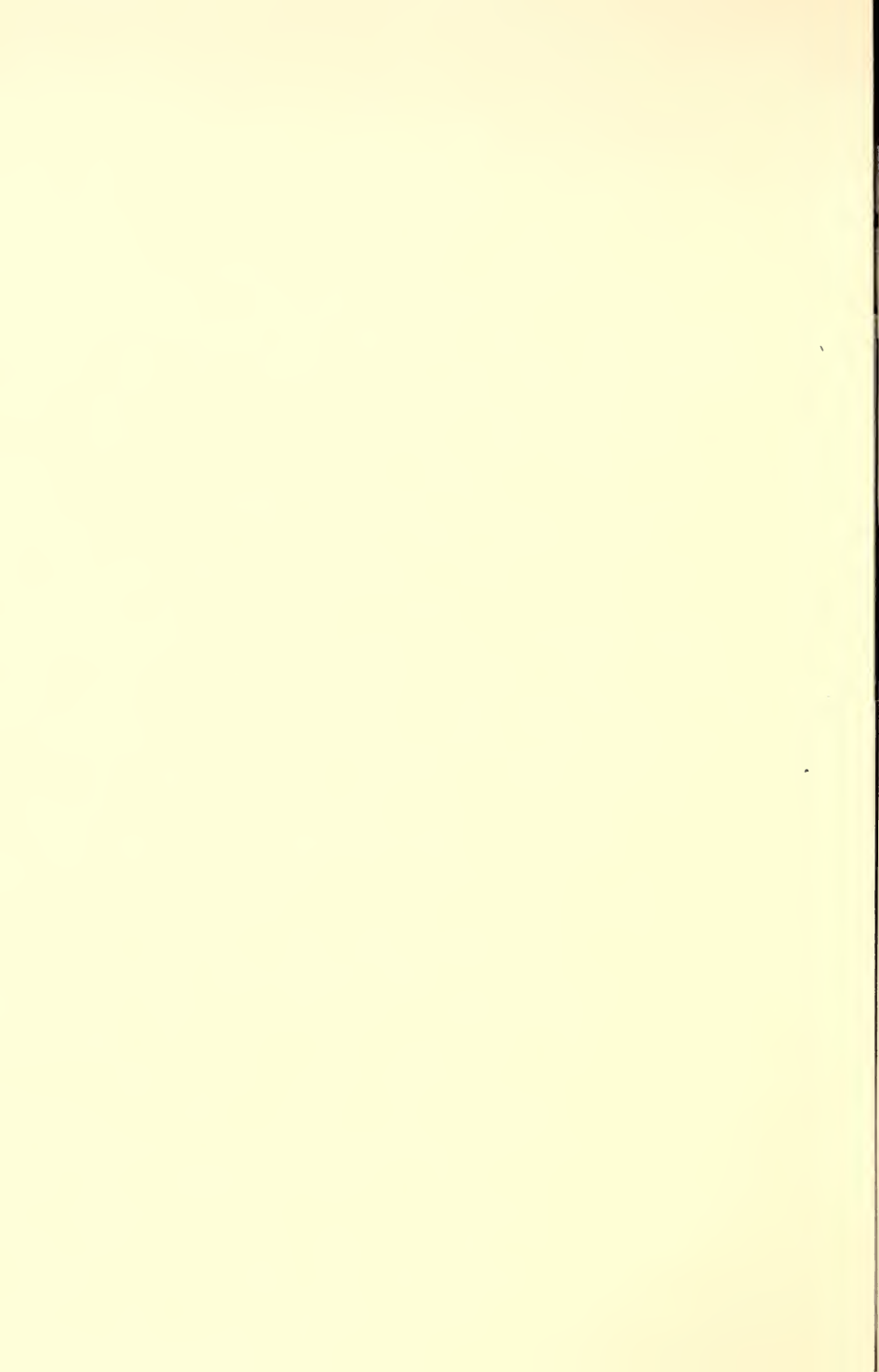


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WARREN HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

Intermountain
Region

Payette
National
Forest



TIME-WORN DREDGE NEAR WARREN

Walking Tour Map

Warren (13)
Landing Field

(11) The Chinese in Warren
(Winter Inn)

Unity Mine Tailings (12)

(10) Warren Dance Hall

(9) Warren Tavern

Algalamation/Assay
Office

(5) Former site of
Root/Otis Morris Store

(6) Cemetery

Barn

Green House"

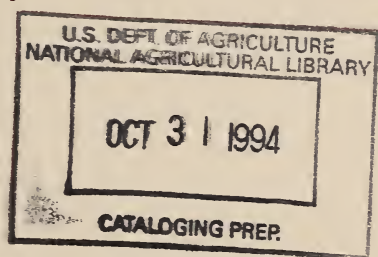


HOW TO GET STARTED

Now that you have arrived at the Warren Guard Station, it is time to begin the quarter-mile walking tour. With the exception of the cemetery, which sits atop a small hill, the tour stays on the main street of Warren. The tour is easily accessible to foot traffic, wheelchairs, baby strollers, etc.

The walking tour starts at the Guard Station, then leads back up to the main street on which you arrived. With the Guard Station at your back, turn left on the main street. As you walk, match the historic site numbered on the map to its corresponding interpretive text contained in this guide.

Please remember that many of these buildings are privately owned. Respecting the owner's rights is appreciated.



IF WARREN'S WALLS COULD TALK....

by James L. Kincaid

INTRODUCTION

As you look down Warren's main street, imagine the history that has occurred here. After the gold discovery in 1862, the town held over 2,000 people. By 1870 many whites had moved out but about 1,200 Chinese had replaced them. During lulls in mining activity the population plummeted but soared again as dredging started in the 1930s.

Many have trod Warren's streets: Sylvester "Three-Fingered" Smith, Indian fighter; the hunter, "Cougar Dave" Lewis; Madam Saux, born of French nobility; Polly Bemis, a Chinese slave; and Ah Khan, "honorary mayor" of Warren.

Warren winters promised skiing, horse-drawn sleigh rides, Chinese New year celebrations and temperatures as low as minus 41 degrees. Current residents claim that minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit is confirmed when the old buildings "talk to you" (the logs snap due to the intense cold). Summers offered good mining weather (about 80 degrees), Fourth of July horse racing and the Fat Man's Race.

Except for occasional bar fights, Chinese tong wars, highway robberies and a huge 1904 business district fire, Warren considered a relatively calm mining camp.

In 1989, the "Whangdoodle" fire threatened the entire town. The fire started in the Whangdoodle Creek drainage. During the fire, burning twigs and ash rained on the town. Whangdoodle was so named because a miner and a schoolmarm were said to have had a "Whangdoodle" of an affair near the creek.

Many of Warren's buildings are over 100 years old. If only the walls could talk, what stories they could tell.

POINTS OF INTEREST

No. 1. Warren Guard Station - In 1918, the Forest Service moved its Guard Station from Hays Station, near the Salmon River, to Warren. Construction dates at the Station site range from the barn built in 1909 to the 'modern' 1959 frame house. The other facilities were built by Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The water cannon, or "hydraulic giant," now in front of the station, washed the hillsides through sluice boxes as part of the placer mining process. The Guard Station offers information and exhibits on the history of the area.

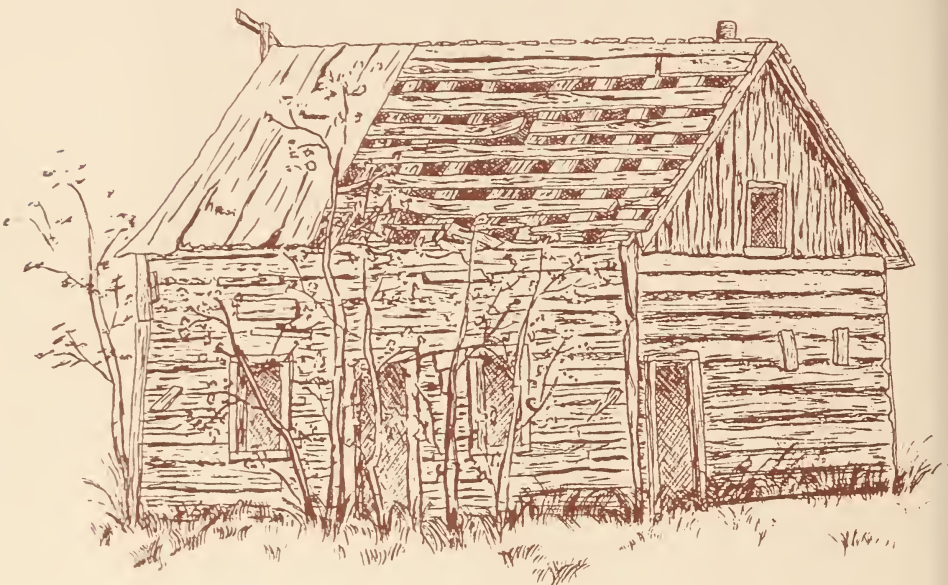
No. 2. Warren School - In 1868, Warren had the first public school in Idaho County, and boasted four students. In 1887, \$180 was collected to build a new school house signaling a banner year in the 19th century education. Subjects included spelling, penmanship, reading and singing. Books for the entire school cost about \$27 per year and the institution was sustained on between \$100 and \$150 each year.



WARREN SCHOOL

The front one-room portion of the building is over 100 years old. The back half was added to accommodate increased attendance during the 1930s dredging. In this century, there was a debate in town about correction of the backwards 'N' on the sign over the school's entrance. Correction was defeated because "that was the way it had always been and there was no reason to change it now."

No. 3. "Green House" - The office/residence for the Justice of the Peace was the "Green House." Andy Kavanaugh assumed the office in 1895 and was distinguished by never rendering a verdict. Kavanaugh threw all his cases out of court on the basis of "hearsay evidence" because "it made a lot smoother living in the community." After selling his two-thirds of the Warren Meadows to the dredge company, Kavanaugh left town and was never heard from again.



"GREEN HOUSE"

No. 4. Barn - Indian activities alarmed Idaho's white population during the late 1870s. Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce tribe were struggling through Idaho trying to escape the U.S. Cavalry by reaching the Canadian border. Closer to Warren, the Sheepeater Indians attacked ranchers living on the South Fork of the Salmon River.

This barn, probably constructed by Warren merchants Kelly and Patterson in the early 1880s, was a reaction to the threat of Indian attack. The gun ports (small openings in the walls of the barn) allowed defenders to fire from protected positions. The Indians never attacked Warren, but the barn would have been a stout defense.



OLD BARN WITH GUN PORTS

No. 5. Business district - Businesses have come and gone during Warren's long history. In the early days, the town boasted a boarding house, butcher shop, blacksmith shop, hotel, general store and several bars. The 1904 fire destroyed many commercial establishments. It has never been established whether the fire was accidental or arson-caused.



JESS ROOT/OTIS MORRIS STORE (not standing)

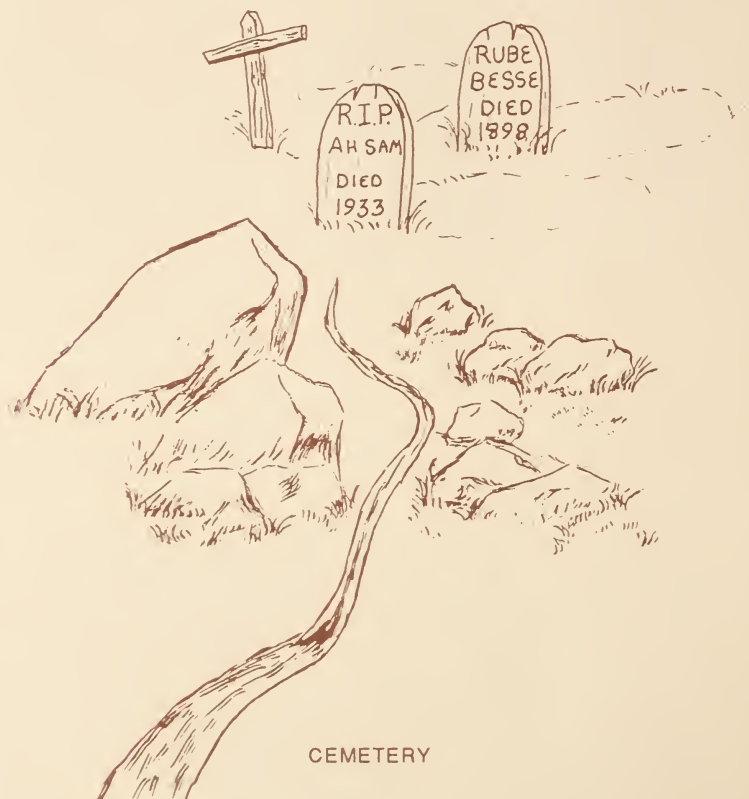
The 1904 fire also destroyed the Kelly and Patterson Store whose inventory (everything from personal items to mining equipment) came to Warren on pack trains.

The distinctive domed store belonged to Otis Morris who purchased it from Jess Root in 1926. It collapsed under the weight of snow and was removed.

"Hocum Felta" was a mens' club. One entertainment was telling jokes while everyone tried not to react. Getting even a smile from performer or listeners signalled a coup de grace.

As the Chinese arrived, they kept to themselves, using their own stores, butcher shop, gambling house, saloons, doctor and pharmacy.

No. 6. Cemetery - Like many gold rush cemeteries, this one holds the locally famous and the unknown. About half of the 90 graves are named. The other graves are anonymous. Most of the infants died of childhood diseases. Causes of adult deaths include illness, old age, and violence.



James Rains, the Warren pioneer killed by the Sheepstealer Indians, was buried here in 1879. John "Tow Head John" Babion arrived in Warren in 1863 and lies buried here. Babion got his nickname while mining the "Tow Head" claim, a gold-bearing ledge of rock. Richard (Dick) Hambley was buried after losing a 1908 duel over the ownership of a mining claim. Steve Winchester shot Hambley with a Iver-Johnson .38 caliber pistol. Winchester was acquitted of the slaying because Hambley fired the first shot. Ah Sam, a long-time Warren resident, was buried here in 1933. Sam was the "honorary mayor" of Warren because he was well-liked and respected by his fellow residents.

During Chinese festivals, it was customary to offer their dead elaborate meals of barbecued pork and chicken. After the Chinese left the grave site, whites would steal and eat the food. There are few Chinese graves here because, according to custom, as the workers returned to their homeland, they disinterred the bodies and took them back to China.

No. 7. Amalgamation/Assay Office - The front portion of this building was built in the 1890s. The back portion, with the unusual chimney, was added in 1931 by the Baumhoff and Fisher Dredge Company.

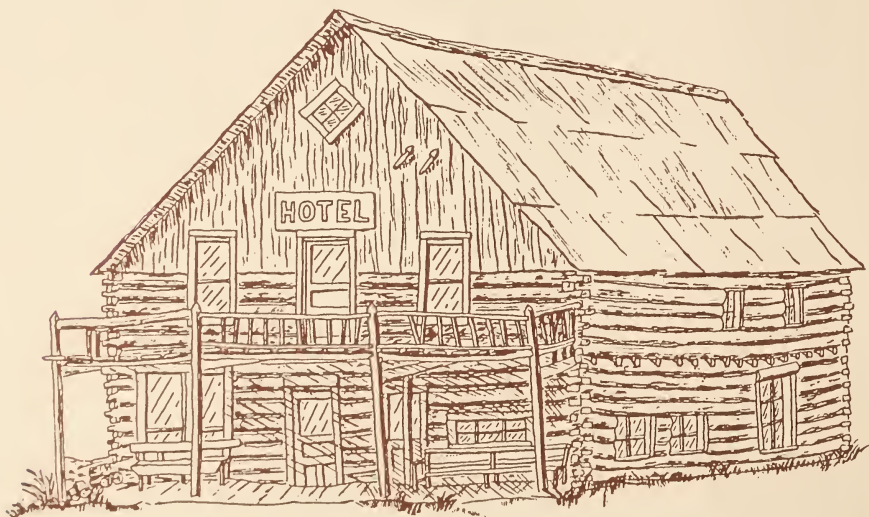


AMALGAMATION/ASSAY OFFICE

The Baumhoff and Fisher dredge, the largest producer in the district, mined thousands of ounces of gold. Mercury, used to capture the gold in the dredge's sluice boxes, was removed before the gold was sent to an assay office. The amalgam (the mercury and gold mixture) was taken to this office and retorted. Retorting used heat to turn the mercury to a gas, leaving the gold as the final product. The highly poisonous gas was vented out the small chimney on the back of the building. The gold was cast into bricks, each 8 inches long, 4 inches wide, and 1-1/2 inches thick. The bricks were wrapped in brown paper and shipped to the Boise assay office by parcel post. Each brick was worth \$10,000 when gold sold for \$35 per ounce. At this rate, the Warren dredges recovered about \$4 million worth of gold.

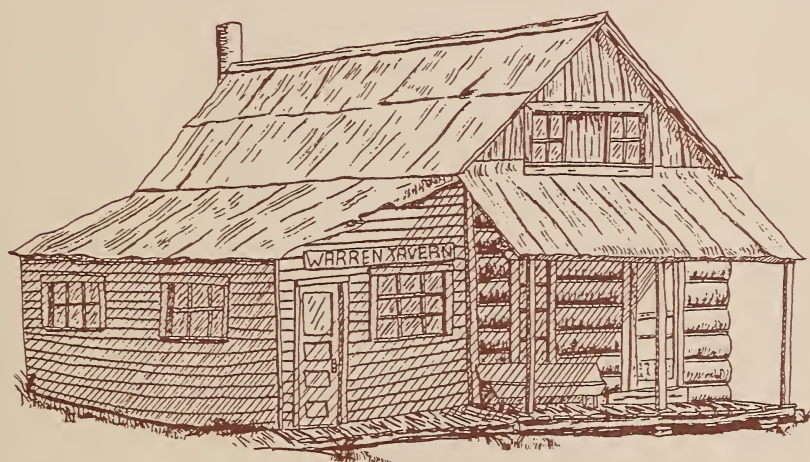
The office sold gold scales and weights and evaluated ore samples for local miners. Dredge company trucks were serviced by the gas pump in front of the building.

No. 8. Warren Hotel - Previous hotels and boarding houses have been destroyed by time and the 1904 fire. This structure, known as the "new Warren Hotel," was built about 1912. Proprietors Ed and Ethel Roden offered rooms and food. During the 1930s the hotel was home for many dredge workers.



WARREN HOTEL

No. 9. Warren Tavern - This tavern, and the Last Chance Saloon, now a private residence, represent Warren's historical watering holes. Less than a year after the 1862 gold discovery, several saloons were operating. In 1890, Charles Bemis was the proprietor of the Warren Saloon (no longer standing) which offered "Pure Whiskeys, Wines, Liquors and Cigars." Bemis occasionally held dances, closing the bar so ladies could enter. Between 75 to 100 people danced to a flute, banjo, accordion and two violins. Dances included schottishes, quadrilles, polkas, mazurkas, minuets and waltzes. Including a midnight supper buffet, festivities often lasted until dawn.



WARREN TAVERN

The Last Chance Saloon was primarily a card room/gambling parlor. The building originally straddled Warren Creek and when mining activity threatened the site, the whole building was picked up and relocated.

In the early 1900s, the bars were temporarily closed because no liquor was allowed on Forest Service land. Idaho County voted to "go wet" in 1911. Bars reopened with hours from 5 a.m. to 12 p.m., closed on Sundays and election days. "Prohibition" briefly closed the bars during the 1920s though Warren's strict compliance with that law is arguable.

No. 10. Warren Dance Hall - This hall was owned by the local merchant, Otis Morris. From 1905 to the start of World War II, Saturday night dances lasted until 2 a.m. Local musicians played violin, trumpet and a bellows-powered organ that was transported to Warren by pack mules. Dances included fox trots and waltzes, as the "Jitterbug" had not yet become a craze in Warren.



WARREN DANCE HALL

No. 11. The Chinese in Warren - A display of local Chinese artifacts may be viewed at the Winter Inn, Warren Guard Station and the McCall Ranger's Office.

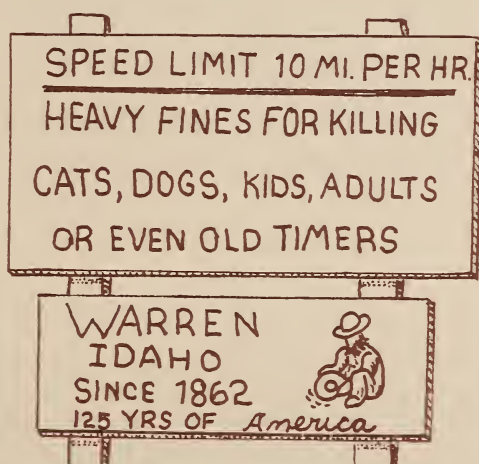
Most of the Chinese came to America to build the transcontinental railroad. In 1869, the Central Pacific (built by Chinese labor) and Union Pacific railroads were united with the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah. Upon completion of the railroad, Chinese laborers came to mining camps in the Northwest. As the majority of Warren's population during the late 1800s, they found work as highly organized work gangs constructing ditches, local roads and trails, and working in the mines.

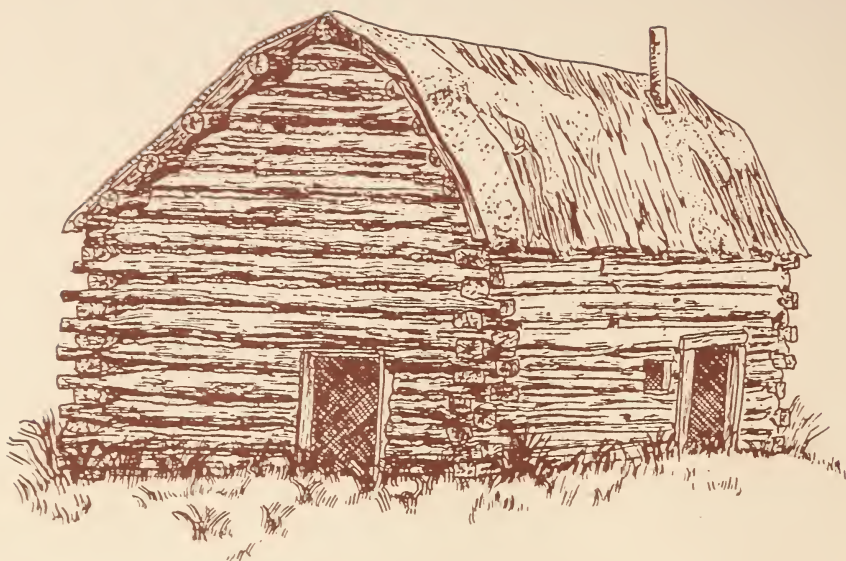
They ran pack trains, supplied Warren with fresh fish from the Salmon River, vegetables from the terraced gardens and created their own business district. Though great in number, the Chinese were considered a minority because they could not obtain U.S. citizenship. As a result, theirs' was a society with a society.

Their celebrations and calamities were apart from Warren's traditionally white structure. The Chinese had considerable trouble among themselves in the form of tong (gang) wars. Each tong had their own particular type of weapon, usually a personalized knife, which accounted for many murders. Other Chinese died in mining accidents and five were reportedly killed by Sheepeaters at the beginning of the War. There is speculation that whites killed the five Chinese in order to facilitate the Sheepeater War and eventual removal of the Indians.

No. 12. Unity Mine Tailings - The Unity Mine tailings can be seen at the end of the landing field nearest the town. Waste material (tailing) from the mine formed this long, rectangular mound. As excavation extended further in to the granite mountain, discarded rock was loaded into track-mounted ore cars. The cars were then pushed out of the mine and dumped, forming the mound. The top of the mound was kept level so the tracks could be extended as the tailings accumulated.

No. 13. Warren Landing Field - The original landing field was built in 1931 by Baumhoff's Idaho Gold Dredging Company. During Idaho's severe winters, trails and roads are blocked by snow, and, to this day, airplanes transport Warren's supplies and mail. Dredging destroyed the original field. In 1937-38 the dredge company, Forest Service and local citizens leveled the dredge tailings and the field became usable again.





100 YEAR OLD DWELLING

SUMMARY

Warren, Idaho, has experienced a long, varied past. That it stands today is a tribute to the community's resilience. Many gold-rush towns have vanished, taking history with them as they decayed. We are fortunate that Warren still exists.

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For more information on Warren:

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Elsensohn, Alfreda M. (Sister). **Pioneer Days in Idaho County.** Vol. 1 and 2. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printer, 1965.

Helmers, Cheryl. **Warren Times - History of Warren, Idaho 1862-1942.** Wolfe City, Texas: Henington Publishing Company, 1988.

Acknowledgements:

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